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# ABROAD

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## PARIS

### *Opening to Iran*

The new French prime minister, Jacques Chirac, has wasted no time moving into the foreign-policy domain which was once the exclusive preserve of President François Mitterrand, his political foe. Chirac attended the Tokyo summit meeting along with Mitterrand in an unprecedented tandem arrangement. Chirac has already been to various other foreign capitals and appointed ambassadors into the bargain. But his most daring move so far has been to seek a "normalization of relations" with Iran. He announced this objective publicly in a speech to the National Assembly in which he described Iran as "a great country for which France feels not the slightest hostility"; and he dispatched the second-ranking official of the Quai d'Orsay, Secretary-General André Ross, to Teheran. Though Chirac is an avowed friend of President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, the Iranian government does not hold this against him, according to Iranian diplomats in Paris. It only wants Chirac to take a more balanced view of French military assistance. Another grievance Iran has against France concerns a \$1-billion loan Teheran made to the French for the development of various nuclear projects, which has never been paid back by the French entrepreneurs. Negotiations have now begun on this subject.

## BONN

### *Twins Semi-Fraternal*

For the first time since Germany was divided forty years ago, a West German city and an East German one have been twinned. Ironically (or perhaps on purpose) the cities are as far away from each other as possible, as if their respective governments were wary of the arrangement. Saarbrücken, in the Federal Republic, is within a stone's throw of the French border, and Eisenhüttenstadt is next to the Polish frontier, far in the eastern confines of the Communist state. Both are steel towns. Eisenhüttenstadt was built new after the war and briefly named Stalinstadt. Saarbrücken has a far more distinguished history. Fortified by Louis XIV's master engineer, Vauban, in the late seventeenth century, it was the birthplace of Napoleon's Marshal Ney. The agreement foresees visits between the twins by groups only. But, from the East German point of view, there may be a hidden motive in the choice of Saarbrücken. East German Communist chieftain Erich Honecker comes originally from the Saarland; it may be that this occasion will provide him with the excuse for a first visit to the Federal Republic, a project often proposed and as often canceled.

## FRANKFURT

### *Social Bombshell*

A book chronicling the life of Turkish immigrant laborers in Germany has burst like a bombshell here, selling two million copies in six months. *Ganz Unten (Way Down Deep)* is by Günter Wallraff, a militant reporter who, masquerading as a Turkish worker named Ali, lived among the Turks and worked with them for more than a year, earning trifling wages in conditions of near slavery, without social security, medical care, or legal recourse. Wallraff

found that Turks were rented out in groups by labor contractors to various industries and agricultural establishments. He started out on a farm where he worked ten hours a day for only board and lodging, sleeping in an abandoned car or a barn full of manure. When he went to a soccer match between German and Turkish teams, spectators threw cigarette butts at his head and poured beer over him as they screamed, "Get out, Turks! Germany for the Germans!"

## AGRA

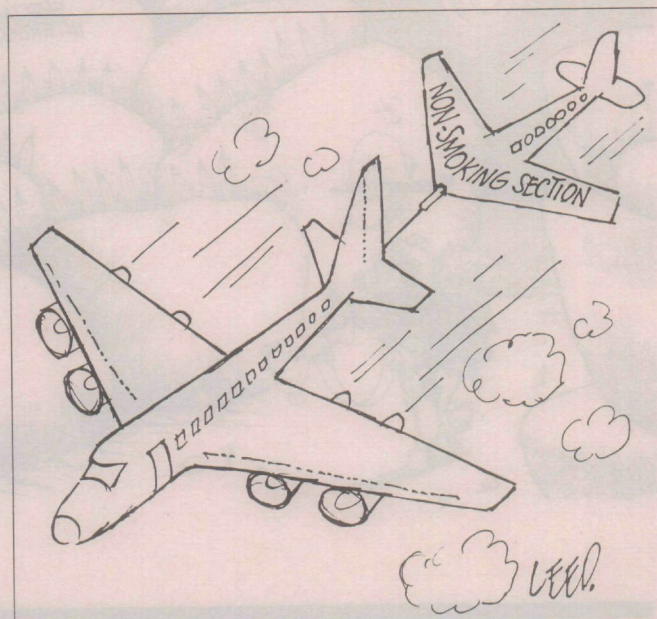
### *Raindrops on the Floor*

The Taj Mahal is one of the world's great architectural marvels, and its dome by moonlight, or any other light, is a legendary sight. It was, therefore, a shock when puddles of water were recently discovered on the marble floor of the main hall of the building, just under the famous dome. A small leak had evidently developed in the northeast side of the roof. The leak surprised the engineers responsible for the Taj Mahal's upkeep, because the original architect employed in the seventeenth century by the Emperor Shah Jehan carefully designed a double wall inside the dome to make it waterproof despite heavy rains such as occurred last summer. There has been only one leak in the past, shortly after the dome was finished in 1648. It was repaired by pouring in molten silver. Technicians have not yet decided what to do about the post-Silver Age leak.

## LONDON

### *Sing Me Your Song, O*

The renowned D'Oyly Carte Company, which introduced and then perpetuated so many of Gilbert and Sullivan's best-known operas over the last hundred years, was disbanded in 1981, much to the regret of Savoyards around the world. But it may arise from its ashes. Dame Bridget D'Oyly Carte, granddaughter of the founder and last of the family, died recently and left a will bequeathing much of her considerable estate to the trust that ran the company, chiefly one million shares of stock in the palatial Savoy Hotel. She also left her country house in Buckinghamshire for its benefit, as well as other assets. Dame Bridget set up the D'Oyly Carte Trust in her lifetime, and gave it all her rights to the Gilbert and Sullivan works.



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